



Yoram Kaufman,
A Retrospective

In Memory of
Yoram J. Kaufman
(1948–2006)

Dr. Yoram J. Kaufman, a senior atmospheric scientist in the Climate and Radiation Branch at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, died on May 31 from injuries he received in a collision with a car while biking near Goddard on May 26.

Yoram was a highly regarded Goddard Senior Fellow in the Earth-Sun Exploration Division, now the Earth Sciences Division, who worked on a number of high-profile Earth Science missions developed by NASA or its international partners, especially CNES (French Space Agency) and ISA (Israel Space Agency).

He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in physics from the Technion–Israeli Institute of Technology and his Ph.D. from the Tel-Aviv University in Israel. He came to NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in 1979 on a National Research Council resident research fellowship.

Among his many accomplishments, he served as the Project Scientist for NASA's very successful Terra mission for four years, carrying this leadership role through its launch in December 1999 and into its first year of Earth observations. He developed methods for remote sensing of fires and aerosols, and he conducted field research on how emissions from fires play a major role in Earth's climate system. Yoram wrote or co-authored over 200 scientific papers published in refereed journals, including several papers in

Science, Nature, and the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

His recent work included theoretical and experimental research on atmospheric radiative transfer and remote sensing, including remote sensing of aerosol particles on a global scale, water vapor and their interaction with clouds, their impact on climate, and their relationship to their sources, for example, fires due to biomass burning in the tropics.

From 1993–1995 he conducted the Smoke/Sulfate, Clouds and Radiation (SCAR) field experiments in both Brazil and the U.S. to characterize smoke aerosol properties, their emissions from fires, and their effect on clouds and radiation.

He was a recipient of the NASA GSFC William Nordberg Award for Earth Science and has received the NASA Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement. In 2005, Yoram was presented the NASA GSFC Special Act Award, and was elected a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society. Additionally, during his career at NASA, he received six meritorious awards, including the Peer Award, Exceptional Achievement, Exceptional Performance, and Best Mentor Awards.

His colleagues at NASA and the worldwide Earth science community mourn the loss of an exceptional scientist, a compassionate man, a charismatic leader, and a true visionary with a passion for protecting our planet.

Yoram is survived by his wife Jean, his son Nadav, and his daughter Daphne.